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SOME PHASES OF 4-H CLUB WORK THAT HAVE LIVED THROUGH A QUARTER CENTURY

A radio talk by Mrs. Ola Powell Malcolm, Extension Service, broadcast in the 4-H Club program, National Farm and Home Hour, Saturday, May 6, 1939, by a network of 104 associate NBC radio stations.

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Mr. J. A. Evans has given us glimpses of farm boys' and girls' clubs when they were called corn clubs and tomato clubs. From 1906 to 1908 farm boys enrolled in corn clubs in several States. The first girls' club began in Aiken County, South Carolina, in 1910 with 47 members. In many counties the results of the work from an economic, as well as an educational point of view, were large enough to attract National attention. "The fact that Home Economics has a place in the Extension Act alongside of agriculture is directly traceable to the work done by the women agents who started canning clubs." These agents kept before their eyes such objectives as "developing the resources, increasing the harvest, improving the landscape, brightening the homes, and flooding the people with knowledge of helpful things."

The distinctive nature of the demonstration idea has continued to keep alive many phases of early club work, even as new activities have been introduced to meet changing conditions in the business of farming and homemaking. Like all great reforms this demonstration work cannot be done for the people, to be benefitted, but must be done by them to be effective. The agents soon realized the philosophy and the power of the demonstration work. A field report from an early agent contained the following: "After all, this canning club work means that we are to get a girl to do something worthwhile, have it approved by those she loves, and then lead on to greater things." This definition contained the promise of expansion and evolution as the work developed. The 4-H Club motto, "To Make The Best Better", continues full of inspiration for the oldest club members as well as the youngest in setting obtainable goals.

The 4-H insignia originated in 1913 as a brand name for club members' products which should come up to standard requirements. The figure 4 in front of the letter H soon appeared on an attractive label for canned tomatoes. The 4-H brand became favorably known and systematic work continued on the part of agents and club members to raise and maintain standards of quality in products sold under the 4-H label. The 4-H became our National Club insignia and gives the name to the largest farm youth organization in the world, including members in many foreign countries, where boys and girls have patterned farm group activities after the 4-H Club work in the United States.

As the demonstration plans unfold we see from the first tin cans of tomatoes the farm home pantry demonstrations have developed during the quarter century. 4-H members have come to realize that the family year's food supply, amounting in value to \$500 or \$600, could be raised on the farm and save food money to buy other needed things the farm could not produce. During this period of time there was no doubt of the contribution the Club boys and girls could make toward better farm family living. More than 10,000 Club members in one State last year who took part in various phases of poultry improvement work recorded an average of more than 175 eggs per hen with their demonstration flocks, which was almost 3 times the State average production of 63 eggs per hen.

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The yard improvement demonstration has, through the years, grown into a landscape demonstration so as to properly include beautification of the whole farmstead. The demonstrations in sewing, that started with making uniform aprons and caps for canning work, have developed now to where girls enroll to become family wardrobe demonstrators.

The most important phase of 4-H Club work that has lived a quarter century is in the opportunity it offers for developing leaders. Many of the early canning club girls and corn club boys are well-trained, successful homemakers, farmers, teachers and Extension Agents. Much of the cost of their education in many cases was paid for out of the earnings from Club work.

Since the beginning of 4-H work we have believed a better rural civilization could be built in the United States, since civilization is man made and economic institutions are only human.

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